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[TITLE PAGE]

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OF FUNG AND SHILLUK

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Any one who deals with either the Fung or the Shilluk, historians as well as anthropologists, must say a word about the possible relationship between the two kingdoms. Many pages have been written on this subject by well known writers, but the lack of a good comparative study that would envisage the whole problem in its various aspects is noted in some of these works. Others were motivated by "a prioristic" conceptions, or one-sidedness, or depended entirely upon certain points, or "... fever for verbal similarities". 1)

The last word in the controversy has not yet been said, and most probably will not be said. I do not contend that this paper will put an end to the controversies, but I think that by taking into consideration the historical as well as the anthropological points of view, we can reach a safe stage at which we can build our own point towards this complicated subject.

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A) The PROBLEM :

The story begins in 1790, the year James Bruce of Kinnaird -an English traveller- published a voluminous work describing his journey to discover the sources of the Nile, which took place between 1768 and 1773. In 1772 Bruce was in Sennar, the capital of the Fung Kingdom, which was the most important and the most powerful state of the Eastern Sudan in the Middle-Ages. In this city Bruce got a glimpse of history of Kingdoms and tribal movements in this part of Africa. Bruce transmits to us what he heard (and maybe what he imagined) 2) in such a statement:

> "In th year 1504, a black nation, hitherto unknown, inhabiting the western banks of the Bahr el Abiad (White Nile) in about latitude 13, made a descent in a multitude of canoes or boats upon the Arab provinces ..... This race of negroes is in their own country called Shilluck .... At the establishing of this monarchy the king and the whole nation of

1) Arkell was so described by Chataway, p.117

2) It is agreed upon that Bruce always imagined many things, and in his writings pictured himself as a hero who escaped dangers through his bravery etc. ... Read a short description of Bruce's character in Crawford, pp. 853-854

"Shillooks were pagans. They were soon afterwards converted Mohamedism for the sake of trading with Cairo and took the name of Funge, which they interpret sometimes lords or conquerors, and at other times free citizens". 3)

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In another statement Bruce hits upon an important aspect of the inner organisation of the state:

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"It is one of the singularities which obtains among this brutish people, that the king ascends his throne under the admission that he may be lawfully put to death by his own subjects or slaves upon a council being held by the great officers, if they decree that it is not for the advantage of the State that he be suffered to reign any longer. There is one officer of his own family who alone can be the instrument of shedding his sovereign and kinsman's blood. This officer is called Sid el Coom, master of the king's household or servants, but has no vote in deposing him; nor is any guilt imputed to him however many of his sovereigns he thus murdered. Achmet Sid el Coom, the present regicide, and resident in Ismain's palace .... seemed, by a strange accident, to be one of the gentlest spirits of any .... at Sennar. His place of birth was a village of Fazuglo, and it appeared to me that he was still a pagan". 4)

[644]

That was the first time the world ever heard of the name Shilluk, and thus was the beginning of the problem, which is now more than one and a half centuries old. Many authors have supported this opinion of the Shilluk origin of the Fung kingdom, and many as well objected, producing speculations and theories. Others changed their opinions on second thoughts, and until now new handling of the subject and the introduction of new ideas concerning this tangible problem are still forthcoming; but we can summarize these controversies into three major lines:

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1) The Shilluk origin of the Fung. 5)

2) The Arab origin of the Fung - or generally the Eastern origin. 6)

3) The Western origin of the Fung, i.e. Darfur or other western Islamic empires of the vast Sudan. 7)

What concerns us in this paper is the first item; that is, broadly speaking, the relations between the Funges and the Shilluk, while the origin of the Fung themselves is more or less a historical subject.

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3) Seligman, p. 424. (As there is in Vienna but a French translation of Bruce, I prefered to quote him, whenever it was possible, in English from any other book).
4) Seligman, p. 423.
5) Bruce, Arkell, Westermann, (and Crowford to a certain extent).
6) The Fung Chronicles, Awad, Bouscily, and Jackson are for the Arab origin, Chataway and Nalder are for an eastern origin, i.e. the Fung were sent by Abyssinia to restore order after the fall of Christian Soba.
7) Tremaux, and later on Arkell.

121 To begin with, we just need a quick resumé of the historical background, engulfed, as is always the case, in mythological terms, of both components of our subject. Who are the Shilluk, and who were the Funj?

B) The SHILLUK :

131 The Shilluk now are a negroid tribe that occupies mainly the west bank of the White Nile from about Kaka to Tonga - a distance of about 350 km, and extends inland from the river to about 30 to 50 km. They also occupy the lower reaches of the Sobat river and a pocket around the town of Malakal on the eastern banks of the White Nile.

141 144 The physical characters of the Shilluk are surely negroid but they are not Negros. Anthropometric results indicate that they are a tall ethnic group, dolichocephalic and platyrrhine. 8) But within the tribe anthropometrical data also reveals two distinct racial components; the royal family and the common Shilluk, the former being taller and more dolichocephalic. 9) Further, heterogeneity was also detected between the northern part of the Shillukland and the Southern part, with higher stature and higher cephalic index figures in the north. 10)

144 173 This compound heterogeneity has its backing in the Shilluk tradition. The national hero, semi-God, and first king of the Shilluk, Nyikang, led his family on a long march which was divided into two periods of wandering, and gathering adherents and followers from everywhere, and without discrimination, arrived in the present Shilluk land. The stock of wanderers was definitely alien to the peoples who were inhabiting the land, and whom we may call aboriginals of the Shilluk land. Nyakang incorporated part of these aboriginals in his new kingdom; the other part probably fled from the country to the nearest area that provided refuge, and this must have been the eastern Nuba Mountains, to the west of the present Shilluk country. It is naturally expected that after such an event -the coming of a new stock, wielding power in their hands- a caste system would be introduced to the country; the newcomers are now the elite of the country. Titles of nobility are held to the fourth generation. 11) Descendants after the fourth generation are also respected.

144 635 The racial difference between north and south within the Shilluk country is backed by the fact that the country is politically divided in two provinces, opposed to each other to the degree

8) Seligman, p.13, and p. 38. Also Riad, pp. 71-76

9) Riad, pp. 71-76

10) Riad, pp. 71-76

11) Seligman, p. 40.

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of open war in certain cases of Shilluk history. The country is further divided in two religious provinces corresponding to the political provinces, also opposed to each other in certain crucial times such as the event of electing a new king. 144 635

The questions now arise: From where did Nyikang stem, and to which racial and cultural area did he (and the first wanderers of his own family) belong? and when? 144 174

The only detectable physical description relating to Nyikang which I was able to find during my fieldwork among the Shilluk was that Nyikang was a man of medium stature, and of a (relatively) fair complexion. Relevant to this point is that the effigy of Nyikang kept at his shrine at Akurwa is relatively shorter than that of Dak, son of Nyikang. If the complexion was really fair, and there is every possibility that this might be so, then Nyikang's original race typology must have at least a primary degree of Hamitic-negro's mixture if they are not pure Hamitic. 12) It follows then that any effort to pursue Nyikang to his original homeland must be directed to either:

a) the Hamitic homeland aroung the present Nilotic enclave, or

b) the area of possible hybrid on the marginal Hamitic homes, again around this Nilotic eclave.

In other words, the possible home of Nyikang is either to the North or to the East, i.e. Northern Sudan or the Abyssinian plateau, with their marginal areas of race mixture.

From the cultural point of view, there are two possibilities detectable from the Shilluk mythology, though contradictory: 174

A) Nyikang was born in a place where real kingship was known, with a system of electing kings. The electors seemed to be the chiefs and the officers of the country, and it appeared that there was no hope for any candidate to put his claims into effect by means of force, if this electoral council turned him down. Another evidence of this real kingship is found in the presence of a stool, the symbol of the throne. A stool in these parts of the Sudan was originally a representation of "the prerogative of the great, and often only of the king, and so a sign of authority". 13) [M]

B) The original home of Nyikang represented a nomadic cultural type, because agriculture was not known. The tradition tells that the brother of Nyikang who was elected king, threw a sort of digging stick, used for digging graves, towards Nyikang when he left the country. This meant that Nyikang and his followers would perish. But Nyikang, when he settled in the present Shilluk country, used the stick as an agricultural implement. 173 174

12) It may be also an Arab-Negro mixture, because at that time the Arabs were already on the Bahr el Ghazal borders. My informants told me that Nyikang met the Rezeiqat Baggara Arabs in his second period of wandering.

13) Arkell, (A), p. 227.

174 So here is the choice: Nyikang's homeland may be either a civilized state or a semi-civilized state with real kingship, or a pure nomadic type which did not know agriculture, and presumably with a sort of chieftainship. Again there are states with kingship in the North represented by Alwa kingdom with her petty kingdoms in the Gezira, and states with kingship in the East represented by Kaffa kingdom and many other petty kingdoms in south-western Abyssinia. There are also Nomads in the North - in the vast plains of Kordofan and southern Darfur, and in the East represented by the Galla stock. Through future studies we can solve this problem by deciding the possibility of the North or the East as the original home of Nyikang, but this is outside the compass of our present investigation.

Now we come to the third point, namely, when did the migration begin, or when did the foundation of the Shilluk kingdom take place? Naturally, the fixing of such a date will be merely a hypothetical one, built upon the conventional way of dating the period of African kingdoms. The kings list of the Shilluk includes 32 kings up to the present time. Concerning the Shilluk specifically, we have three ways of reckoning the date of Nyikang:

a) by allowing 13½ years for every king as a reigning period [14] and by beginning with king number 31, who reigned until 1951, we get the date of Nyikang at 1533 A.D.

b) by reckoning 13½ years to each king who preceded the king number 23, whose reign began about 1863, the first time the Egyptian government reached the Shilluk country, we get the date of 1566 A.D. as the time of establishing the Shilluk kingdom.

c) the third criterion is getting the mean years of reigning for kings number 23 to 31, whose dates are known to something approaching certainty, and allowing for one king who governed only one year , and then applying this mean to the whole list of the Shilluk kings, we arrive at the date of 1610 as the beginning of Nyikang's rule. This date is the result of 11 years multiplied by 31 kings.

As all these dates are merely hypothetical, and as it is in reality a way of giving only an idea about the time, and not a fixed and a valid date, it follows that to stick to one of these dates, and to build theories upon, it is neither correct nor scientific. What we can say is that about the second half of the 16th century Nyikang founded his rule in the present Shilluk area. If dates give clues to the history of origins, could it have been the case that the upheaval in the Gezira area -the result of the downfall of theAlwa kingdom of Soba about the beginning of the 16th century- had, to a certain extent, something to do with the arrival of Nyikang and his family in the Shillukland? At any rate, we will return to the point of timing the Shilluk migration later on.

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14) "Mr. B. Struck, by taking into consideration all the available (written or unwritten) chronicles of African dynasties, has made a calculation on the average duration of the reign of an African ruler". Westermann, P. LI.

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To sum up what has been said above we may say that about the second half of the 16th century, a relatively fair complexioned wave of people settled in the present Shillukland, and united the aboriginals under the leadership of Nyikang into the framework of a nation. 174

The Shilluk traditions, as my informants told me, reveal that the ruling class brought with it the system of kingship. Nyikang had taught the people the exact procedure of electing the new kings; a procedure which is followed to the word until our day. If this is true, we can presume that Nyikang, when he taught the Shilluk this unwritten law, was quoting as much as possible the succession law of his own homeland. Some of the important procedures, or let us say a rite performed to know if the deity gives his consent to the new king-elect, is performed under the waters of the Nile. Quite readily this rite would be understood if we remember the Shilluk tradition which says that the original home of Nyikang was situated on the banks of a NAM DOUN , which means a great river or a lake. [173]

Hofmayr tell us that Tugo, the Shilluk king number 10, who reigned between 1690 and 1710, was the first king to introduce new coronation ceremonies. He says: "Tugo führte neue Krönungszeremonien ein, an welchen die Shilluk noch heute streng festhalten". 15) If this is true, and if we reject the story told to me by my informants, and presuming that Nyikang's own family were a stock of nomads, we can say that the present Shilluk kingship was a cultural element among the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, which may have been dormant during the first rule of kings who were still clinging strongly to their own traditions, and most naturally looking down upon the aboriginal practices and cults. A hundred years later, the glorious past of the ruling cast may have dimmed, and mixture and degradation of some of the ruling family members may have ultimately brought about new "shillukicised" generations, thus bringing the old customs into practice. This is a mere conjecture that needs more study to prove or refute it, and this is not the right place to discuss it.

The famous divine kingship among the Shilluk is still in practice. The notion of the kings being the incarnations of the first king, i.e. Nyikang, is still working, and the coronation ceremony of King Kur, in 1951, 17) is an undisputed proof of the existance of such a notion. When such an idea is so strongly adhered to unto now -no matter if they are Moslem or Christian Shilluk converteos- it follows quite logically that the other component of the divine kingship must be functioning, or at least be still vivid in mon's mind, and will be readily executed if there were free chances. 18) The other component is naturally 643

15) Hofmayr, p. 77

16) Westerman, p. 163, translates a story about the objection of Nyikang to human sacrifices practiced by some mysterious people of the river, whom he captured and incorporated in his domains. [114]

17) Howell, pp. 189-203. This article contains a good picture of Shilluk kings installation ceremonies. [648]

18) The government does not allow it any more.

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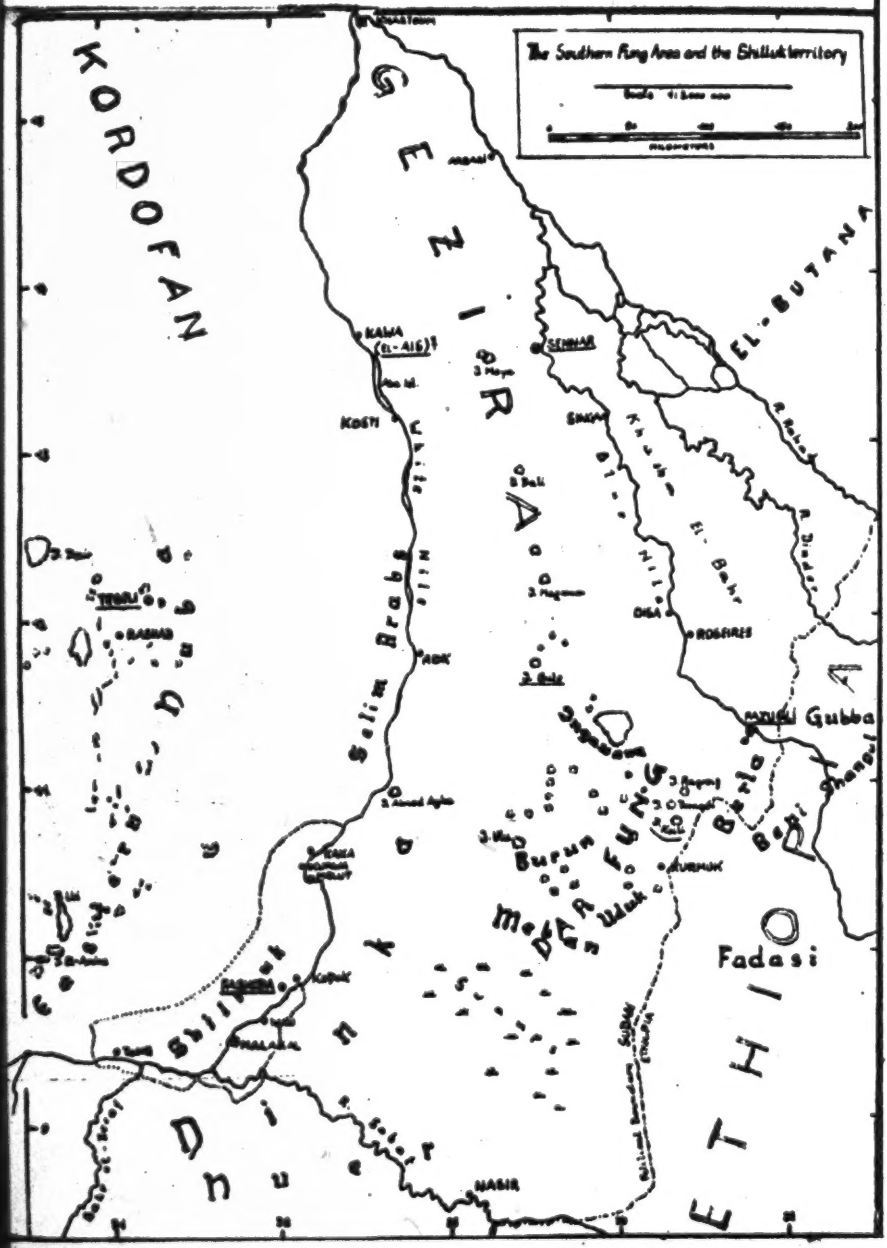

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643 the ceremonial killing of the kings. Some authors have discarded this practice 19), and alluded some killing of kings to family quarrels and competition over the throne. It is true that some brothers killed each other, but this is still one of the attributes of divine kingship.

[648] According to the information I gathered in Malakal, King Dak, who died in 1951 at the Malakal hospital, was well guarded by the police during his treatment in the hospital, and no Shilluk was allowed to visit him lest he may be killed in the same traditional way as his ancestors. 20) My informants were sorry for the natural death of Dak, but they seemed to have accepted it as they were helpless against the troops of the central government. Just how far the Shilluk nation as a whole accepted it, I could not tell.

631 The political administration of the Shilluk country and its components may be summarized as follows: 21)

a) The Hamlet:

This is the smallest political unit with a chief at its head. The hamlet is formed by a lineage group of homesteads.

b) The Settlement:

This is a group of hamlets, i.e. a group of lineages gathered into a large area. At the head is a chief, called the Jago.

c) The District:

The Shilluk country is divided into eleven districts; each district is a combination of many settlements. These districts, though said to be organized by Nyikang, are not a permanent political factor. Its importance may have been felt in exceptional periods such as warfare, or to meet a common danger. The [648] Egyptian government, and after it the Anglo-Egyptian government, used such divisions as administrative units. The important districts from the Shilluk point of view were Muomo and Tung, that is, the northern and southern marches of the land.

d) The Provinces:

There are two provinces in the Shillukland. These are important political divisions, and their importance has been shown clearly above. The chief of Dubale Kwom, and the chief of Golbany are the two chiefs of the southern and the northern provinces.

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19) "Evans-Pritchard considers that the ceremonial putting to death of kings (among the Shilluk) is probably a fiction ..." Butt, p. 54.
20) See also Howell, (5) p. 157.
21) Butt, pp. 46-48.

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e) The Capital:

This is Fashoda where the king resides, and where the highest native court of appeal is held under the presidency of the king himself. [692]

The meaning of such a political organization is quite clear. The chief of every division is not selected or appointed by the king, but elected by the group concerned, and is formally invested by a dress from the king as a symbol of his authority. The basis of the Shilluk political system is lineage or clan, and has nothing to do with blood relationship to the royal family. 631 642

The present Shilluk country, it is said, is only a part of what was the Shillukland before. Just how far the Shilluk expansion did reach is controversial. My informants insisted on the fact that Nyikang reached the confluence of the White and the Blue Niles, and built a village there; and he sent messengers northwards to scout the area, but these messengers returned after reaching the site of the present Wadi Halfa (22° north latitude), informing Nyikang of the poverty of the area. After receiving this report, Nyikang did not consider another expedition, and returned to Akurwa where he was last seen. This is quite clearly an exaggeration, because at that time the state of affairs in the central and northern Sudan was just beginning to take its present shape. Moreover, the Fung kingdom and the Arab state of Gerri were in their first phases of formation, i.e. politically and militarily strong enough, and on the watch against newcomers and adventurers. 173

What may have been the case is that probably the Shilluk, taking advantage of their capacity as good river-farers, descended the White Nile in their canoes. 174

Now the White Nile is an interesting water course from the geographical, geological and hydrological points of view. The life story of this river, though controversial, is an interesting one, but what concerns us here is that the river is very weak, shallow and broad, with many islands, many curves, studded with swamps on each side, full of grass vegetation, fords, an ill defined basin, and in the flood season the water inundates large stretches on both sides. Such a geographical environment provides an economically poor land, with no attraction to wealthy agricultural states. But, on the other hand, it provides a paradise for fishermen, refugees, and to a certain extent a good grazing and watering area for nomads during the dry season. Such a state of affairs is well described in the following quotation: 133

"Le Bahar el Abiad (the White Nile) arrose ce territoire, & divisé, soit par l'art, soit par la nature, en un nombre considérable de petits canaux, il forme autant de petites îles, sur chacune desquelles il y a un village ... Les habitans sont tous pêcheurs, & ont des canots avec lesquels ils remontent & descendent (le fleuve) ... " 22)

22] Bruce, 440.

133 From the strategical point of view, this broad, shallow and swampy water course would provide a sort of permanent border to any state east or west of it, as well as a kind of no-man's land, in which case river farers are safe.

174 It is most probable that the Shilluk, perhaps with their leader Nyikang, or alone, undertook many scouting expeditions downstream, and it may be the case that their economic activities as fishermen also took them down stream where they found the good shelters which the Islands provide. Furthermore, the Shilluk may have taken advantage of their safe positions, and of their skill with their canoes, to fall upon wandering nomads by surprise, and loot their cattle on both sides of the river. In this way it came [131] to be that Shilluk villages were reported on the Islands 33) south of 13 degrees latitude.

We do not know whether such settlements were permanent or seasonal, but the existence of such settlements must not at all mean that the Shilluk occupied both sides for sure, or even established Shilluk authority for a single generation. This is quite clear from Shilluk tradition itself. Quoting my informants, I would rather say that Nyikang stayed some years down stream, 173 and then returned. There was no other repetition of such a Shilluk 174 adventure. None of the followers of Nyikang tried to press their claim northward. Moreover, the Shilluk traditions define the country as being 'from Mucmo to Tung' 34), these being the present Shilluk borders. Had it been more once, why was it not preserved in the tradition?

c) The FUNG :

173 The Fung kingdom was one of the most important kingdoms that ever rose in the Sudan. It was the sole heir to the Alwa kingdom. The founder of the Islamic Empire was a man called Amara Dunkas. There is evidence that this Amara was, before founding Sennar, a king of an area which may be defined as corresponding to the present Southern Butana 35), the area where the Abyssinian plateau and the Sudan plains meet. His capital was called Lemmi, 36) which some historians put on the present Ethiopian and Eritrean border, between the rivers Tekeze and Khor el Gash, 37)

It is agreed that Amara Dunkas did not conquer Soba, the Capital of Alwa, alone, but he was a higher partner with another Arab chief in this great task. The Fung Chronicles tell us that Amara rallied his forces near Jebel Moya and moved north, while the Arabs moved south from their stronghold near the sixth cataract, and together smashed Soba. 38)

33) Westermann, p. XX.
34) Lienhardt, p. 181.
35) Beasily, p.48, defines the first kingdom of Amara as including the northeastern part of the present Ethiopia.
36) Crawford, pp. 136-142. A description of Benbani's journey and how he met Amara in Lemmi. Arkell in (A) tried to reduce the name Lemmi to Lai, a district in the present Shillukland.
37) Beasily's opinion given to me in a personal discussion in Cairo.
38) Awad, p. 288.

How the opinions of different writers on the way Soba fell, form a controversial point. Before summarising these different ideas, it is better to define the elements which played a rôle in this act of history: 174

a) Alwa kingdom:

The Capital was Soba - a town situated on the eastern bank of the Blue Nile near the present Khartoum. The boundaries of this kingdom must have been reduced much by Arab infiltration in the north, east and west. The Gezira must have been the last property with ill-defined borders to the extreme south.

b) Arab settlers:

These are reported to be living peacefully in the Alwa towns, 29) being a "part of the economic structure" 30) of Alwa.

c) Arab nomads:

These were new-comers, who surged in powerful waves after the ascendancy of the Mamluks and Turks in Egypt. They were more fanatic, and their economic status was as yet unsettled, "their activities being competitive and not complementary" 31) to the Alwa kingdom.

d) The Funj:

A kingdom in the southern Butana and Gezira which was seeking safe and free trade routes to Cairo and the northern world.

The Funj chronicles say that "d" and "c" allied together against "a)" and "b)", and in the decisive battle of Arbagi the Alwan army was routed.

Mr. Chatenay says that the Funj were "a leader with an army sent by Buneas (Abyssinia) to re-establish the older order and relationships (with Alwa? or this part of the Sudan at all?)" 32) His explanation is that Arabs "c)" conquered Soba, and that "d)" united with "b)", and together conquered Arabs "c)", and afterwards, the chief of "b)" was "given a position of great importance" in the Funj kingdom. 33)

To James Bruce and Arkell the elements of the scene were: a) Alwa, b) Arabs, c) Shilluk.

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29) Trimingham, p. 72, and Arkell (A), p. 208. Both translate Ibn Selim description of Soba.
30) Chatenay, p. 118.
31) Ibid, p. 114.
32) Ibid, p. 114
33) Ibid, p. 118.

174 According to these two authors, the Shilluk made an attack on the Arabs and defeated them; the Arabs were reduced to a tributary state under the Shilluk. Arkell elaborates on the subject with his European mentality of statesman, and proceeds to say that the Shilluk, by a mastery of diplomacy, changed the injured pride of the Arabs to complete alliance with them, by diverting their attention to a common foe. To such high diplomacy, the Alwa kingdom fell as a sacrifice. 34) Thus, the downfall of the Alwa kingdom was undertaken by a combined Shilluk-Arab force !!

175 We may now proceed to give a short historical outline of the Fung kingdom, leaving this controversial point to be discussed below.

In 1534 Amara Dunkas died, leaving a vast realm which extended northward to the third cataract, including Dongola, and eastward to the Red Sea; but Suakin was a Turkish possession at that time. The White Nile probably marked the western border to latitude 13°, whence northwards the country to the west bank, which comprised Arabs from the Jaalin group, must have been under the rule of the Viceroy of Sennar residing at Gerri. To the south, the Fung border included some provinces of present Ethiopia, namely Gubba, Gunjar, and Fadasi. The border in southern Gezira was not clear, but sporadic hints indicate that the Fung expanded steadily southwards. This point will also be discussed later.

The next expansion of the Fung was during the reign of King Abdul Qader, the second or third king. He reduced Jebel Gule, and converted the inhabitants to Islam. The third expansion was also to the south-west. King Baadi Abu Dign crossed the White Nile in 1648, invaded the Tagali Moslem kingdom and reduced it to a tributary state. He also "attacked the Shilluk negroes and took a large number of slaves". 35)

In Fung history, there were two wars with Abyssinia in which there was no decisive result, except for the routing of most of the Abyssinian king's army in the second war. But these wars are not relevant to our subject.

In the year 1747, during the reign of King Baadi Abu Shilluhh, 36) the Fung Empire reached the zenith of its expansion. The whole of Kordofan was won to the Fungs by a man called Mohamed Abu El Kailik. During a battle with the Darfur Army, the Fung were first defeated, "the troops fled, but were rallied by Mohamed Abu El Kailik and his sons, who defeated the Army of the Furs, led

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34) Arkell, (A), p.
35) Westermann, p. LV.
36) Westermann, p. LV, mis-spells his name, and writes it as Gnadi Abu Shilluk, probably he was motivated by the theory of the Shilluk origin of the Fung, and found in the name another backing to the theory, forgetting that by adding "k" at the end, the word would mean -in Sudanese Arabic- the different modes of face scares used until now in the Arabic Sudan. Abu Shilluhh is not a name, but a nickname, and we find it frequent that nicknames were given to many Fung kings, according to their characteristics.

[119]

by Sultan of the Hamjara and Sheikh of the Mesabat at Shambata ... 175
On the news of Abu El Kailik's victories and the courage he displayed reaching Sennar, the king appointed him commander-in-chief; he was also made 'Sheikh' of Kordofan, and granted the viziership (of the kingdom) ...." 37)

With the success of Abu El Kailik, the downfall of the real Fung kings began, and from that time on the government was in the hands of the ministers. Abu El Kailik is said to be from the Hamag, a section of Fung subjects we will discuss later. But it is also said that he is of Arab descent, from the Gamm'ia tribe, and his mother was a Hamag. At any rate the kings were deposed at the wish of the ministers, and the last stand of the kings was smashed with great slaughter in the reign of King Adlan II (1778-1788), after which the power of the ministers was undisputed until 1820, when the Egyptian Army put an end to the already decayed Fung kingdom.

The Fung kingdom was, from the very start, founded on an alliance between the Fung leader and the Arab leader of the northern Arab tribes, i.e. a dual system. The kingdom remained so until the very end, and that was the major political division of the country. Within each part of the kingdom there were semi-independent states or chieftainships. In the north there was the Shaigia, Shendi, and El-Damer. In the south there were Fazogli, Gule, Khasha al Bahr and Keili. The Hamkarria, a powerful Arab tribe in the central Butana plains, was to a certain extent independent. It is also said that there were provinces of which we do not know much regarding their political organization and their boundaries. 38) These are Jebel Moya, Abud, both in central Gezira, Beila, and Tozee in the southern Butana. Sennar itself, while being the capital of the whole kingdom, exercised direct government on the whole of northern Gezira up to the junction of the White and Blue Niles. Gerri was the seat of the viceroys of the northern part of the kingdom, and its direct rule was said to extend on the eastern bank of the Blue Nile as far south as the confluence of the river Binder, and eastwards to the Eritrean border.

As may now be seen, the kingdom was a federation of petty states, corresponding to a large extent to the tribal as well as the geographical units within a large framework of a state under the Fung dynasty.

The racial elements in this kingdom ranged from Negros and Negroids to "Hamites" and "Semites". The broader character of the northern part is undisputedly Caucasian, while the south was an unbroken Negro-land. Reciprocal migrations in both directions, North and South, brought about the present ethnic melange. 174

37) Jackson, pp. 80-81

38) ibid, p. 102

174 But an almost continuous influx of nomads, who are of Semitic or Semito-Hamitic origin, brought about the nearly complete annihilation of Negroid elements in the North, except in such refuge areas as Nubia. In the South, the geographical environment and the paucity of the Caucasian blood, in comparison with the Negro element, created a new type, culturally clinging to the northern element, though outcrops of the old culture remain in function, modified to the new superstructure.

What is of interest to our present paper is the discussion of three names which are misunderstood, these being Fung, Hamag and Bar Fung.

The Fung: Bruce gives the singular of the name by 'Fungo', and the plural 'Fungi'. This is a pure Shilluk form, "o" being in Shilluk the ending of the noun in singular, and "i" that of plural", 39) Now the Arabic singular form of the word is 'funji فنجي', and the plural is 'funj فنج' with a very slight "o" at the end of the word. Did Bruce mix the positions, and instead of writing the singular, write the plural, or vice versa? We have to bear in mind that it was certainly difficult for Bruce to write Arabic, using the Latin alphabet, and so this "o" came at the end of his supposed singular form of the word as a substitute for the Arabic "o" movement, which we call "dammah". At any rate the etymology of the word needs further study, should we not confine the comparison to Shilluk and Arabic only. All authorities on the subject agree that the Fung were a family, not a tribe, which developed numerous offshoots through marriage. The original physical characters, most naturally, will be modified according to the mothers. Thus, we have for example a fair offshoot like Bendi el Ahmer, meaning Bendi the red, due to his white complexion, and we have King Ismail, when Bruce met at Sennar, and who appeared to him as a typical Negro. So it seems unwise to judge the origin of a family by one instance, if we knew that proper Islam does not discriminate races and colours, and accordingly Fung kings married without discrimination, and accordingly different physical types ruled as kings in Sennar.

The Hamag: This name was heard often after the Visiers of Sennar took the real power into their hands, beginning from Mohammed Abu El Kelik, i.e. the beginning of the decadent phase of the kingdom. Seligman says that "Hamag in Arabic means 'ignorant', and is used to indicate a slave or vassal ..." 40) The word in Arabic could mean also an uncultivated, brute, barbarian, disorganised group, wild etc. ... Professor Awad says "In Berne, Arabs call the aboriginal inhabitants 'Beha' ... (and that) some Arabs give the name 'Hamag' to the tribe of Hamam, this being a nomenclature they were used to in the East (of the Sudan of the Nile Valley)". 41)

39) Westermann, p. LIII.

40) Seligman, p. 418

41) Awad, p. 231.

So it appears that Arabs gave this name to a 'hodge podge' of peoples in southern Gezira. Who are these peoples? Professor Evans-Pritchard suggests that the Hamag are, or were, predominantly Berta-speaking. So-called Hamag are found at Roseires, on Jebel Moya and Jebel Gule, and probably on other hills of which we have no knowledge; indeed Mr. L.P. Halder writes to us of this 'disappearing race' as formerly occupying a wide area in the Southern Gezira, through Jebel Mazmum and Dali to Jebel Moya and along the banks of the Blue Nile. This is only a fraction of their old territory; in the FUTUH EL HABASSAH, they are said to extend from Shirê to Kassala, a territory now occupied by the Abyssinian people called Bazen ... there is no doubt that the present day representatives of the latter (Hamag) are the mixed population of a number of the hills between the White and Blue Niles. These form groups of more or less arabized Negroids .." 42) Awad says that "the Hamag are the tribes or the peoples upon whom the Fung extended their suzerainty. They are a melange of tribes, and their languages are numerous". 43) He also states that "the peoples (who were comprised in the Fung kingdom) were naturally not from a Fung origin, and it was necessary to differentiate between the class to which the name applies (i.e. Fung) and the other peoples. That is why we see that all these peoples -or the majority of them- are called Hamag; and it is not easy to point out precisely to which of these peoples the name was applied". 44)

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To understand the problems more clearly, we have to differentiate between two kinds of Hamag, though their origin may be the same. These two sections are:

a) The Hamag, who accepted Islam as their religion and mixed freely with the other segments of the Sennar kingdom. These, I suppose, are the famous Hamag of the decadent phase of Sennar. Naturally, their Islam is not deep enough to prevent such practices of their old religion and culture. These may be found now in small groups and to whom, it appears, Mr. Halder's remark can be applied. The cause of the apparent disappearance of this group is quite clear. The process of assimilation is the sole cause for such disappearance, because 1) it has now been long enough after their conversion to Islam that the segments of their old heritage that kept them united, should be broken, and 2) the ascendancy of a Hamag family to power in Sennar may have reinforced the Hamag unity by adding vanity and glory to their tradition. Now it is more than a century, since the Sennar kingdom and the Hamag supremacy gave way, and such political motive is now useless.

b) The Hamag, who remained intact and preserved their old heritage, are those who were to a greater extent out of reach of the direct Fung rule. These are the peoples who took refuge in the difficult

42) Seligman, p. 416/418.

43) Awad, p. 219.

44) Ibid, p. 224.

174 and relatively poor hills of Southern Gezira, the area now known as Dar Fung.

Dar Fung: The name in Arabic means the home of the Fung, but this area has really nothing to do with the Fung home, except that a part of it was included in the Fung kingdom. This nomenclature is merely administrative and could mislead if warning were not given from the start.

This area forms a geographical unit with the Gezira to the north. They are both confined by the White and the Blue Nile; both are plains studded with 'Inselberge', but these isolated mountains and rocky hills are higher, more numerous, and occupy bigger areas in the South than in the North, i.e. in Dar Fung. Seligman writes that "Many of these Jebels are of considerable size, and whenever there is water on or near them, they support settlements which, to judge by the stone implements found on the sites, date back to immemorial antiquity, indeed to the Old Stone Age". 45) This area is bordered by the Abyssinian highlands to the East, and limited to the South by a swampy area, geographically and hydrologically unknown, and mostly uninhabited. From this swampy area, many Khors (seasonal streams) take their source. Between hills, valleys with wells, and khors occur.

As this forms a refuge area, we find the people inhabiting the hills. These peoples do not form [illegible]ited tribes; they are Negros and Negroids with various diff[illegible] cultures and languages. But on the whole, this area is chara[illegible]ed by the presence of a kind of "throwing stick resembling th[illegible]tralian non-return boomerang", 46) and the use of the bow and poisoned arrows. The existence of these kinds of weapons are not recorded in any part of the central Sudan and may be taken as a proof of the antiquity of the tribes of Dar Fung. Moreover, the existence of sun worship among the Ingassana tribe is quite queer, and surely indicates foreign influence. The Soba stone in Jebel Gule is regarded as the "steel of kingdom ... upon which every paramount chief (mangil) assumes office". 47) Soba is also perceived by Gule inhabitants as: 1) a great Queen; 2) as their ancestress; and 3) as a deity whom they worship. Soba, it should be remembered, was the capital of the Christian Alwa Kingdom, to which reference has been made above. King killing is also prevalent among many of these tribes, but reference to it will be made below.

Such different cultural traits, still persistent among one or the other of the Dar Fung tribes, indicate, no doubt, different cultural layers, stripped from chronological sequence, and practiced haphazardly in this back-water of humanity.

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45) Seligman, p. 413

46) ibid, p. 413

47) ibid, p. 428.

B) SUMMING UP :

Now we come to our point: What was the actual relationship between the Funge and the Shilluk? 174

In the light which was thrown upon the whole situation from the foregoing survey, and in order not to loose ourselves in minute details, we may fix the points of discussion in the following items:

1) The time problem, i.e. dating the foundation of both kingdoms
2) The space problem, i.e. the Fung-Shilluk boundary
3) The cultural aspects of kingship
   a) the meaning of kingship
   b) the mode of accession to the throne
   c) the mode of death of kings.
4) Evidences of the theory of a Shilluk origin of the Fung
5) Conclusion.

1) The Time Problem:

Bruce and Tremaux date the foundation of the Fung kingdom at 1504, Shoucair dates it to 1505, while Caillaud gives 1484 as the date of founding the kingdom. 48) Now if we apply the conventional way of dating back histories, and assume 13½ years as a reigning period for each king, we get the following dates: 114 174

a) At the time Bruce was in Sennar, namely 1775, the ruling king was Ismail, who appears on the list of the Fung kings as number 20, and who ascended the throne in 1769. Multiplying 13½ years by 19 kings would give 1511 as the beginning of the kingdom;

b) Caillaud, Tremaux and Shoucair list 29 kings from the beginning of the dynasty until the Egyptian conquest in 1820. This would give us an approximate date of 1428.

Thus, we have a difference of 84 years between a) and b). This hypothetical difference is well accounted for in the real dates we possess. It was mentioned before that the decadent phase of the Funge began about 1765. The total period of the last 10 kings is only 44 years instead of 135 years, making a difference of 91 years, which corresponds to 84 years of difference between a) and b). This is an almost certain result and proves the validity of the 13½ years as a criterion serving our purpose here.

Concerning the Shilluk, we have stated above the dates of 1533, 1566 and 1610 as representing different results of different criterions. From my point of view, I would prefer the date of 1566 as marking the beginning of the Shilluk kingdom, because it is based on the 13½ years criterion, and it is reckoned from a fixed date, i.e. 1863, when the Shilluk tribe and land were incorporated as a province in the Sudan. Furthermore, we know that in the Mahdiya Regime and its aftermath, Shilluk kings were either killed or deposed, thus 174

48) Jackson, p. 98.

174 making it difficult to get a more or less accurate date indicating the beginning of the Shilluk as a unified nation under the present dynasty.

Another point which may give an additional clue to the timing problem, and which supports the idea that the Shilluk are comparatively younger as a kingdom than the Fung, is what Westermann mentions in his book about the Shilluk. He states that "In 1770 they (the Fung) even wrested the province of Kordofan from the Darfur kings, but it was retaken by the latter five years later. This was about the time when the Dinkas emigrated from the Bahr El Ghazal and took possession of the right bank of the White Nile under their great chief Akwai Chakab; by them the Fung were expelled from the eastern shores of the White Nile into the Blue Nile region". 49) About this time, the kings Nasar (1766-1769), and Ismail 1769-1776) were ruling in Sennar, and about that time also Bruce was in Sennar (1772), yet he never mentioned an event of such great consequence !!!

During this same period we read in Hofmayr that Tekot, the king number 9 in the Shilluk list, was a man of militant type, and he undertook so many military expeditions and adventures that the Shilluk nicknamed him 'the Conquerer'. Hofmayr continues: "Bald nach seinem Regierungsantritte hat Tekot Gelegenheit, seine kriegerischen Eigenschaften zu betätigen. Die Stämme der Dinka trafen um diese Zeit Vorbereitungen zu einem Ausrettungskrieg, da die Völker der Shilluk, welche zwischen ihre beiden Abteilungen eingekeilt lebten, ein für sie mächtiges Hindernis bildeten ... Den vom Bahr-el-Ghazal kommenden Dinka gelang es durchzubrechen und sich am östlichen Nilufer anzusiedeln, so dass die Schilluk sich zwischen beiden Dinkazweigen eingekeilt befanden". 50) It is natural that the Shillukland would form the shortest way for a Dinka migration from Bahr el Ghazal to the eastern banks of the White Nile. The wars with the Dinka continued during Tekets reign and those of his successor's. Tekot reigned about 1690 or 1700, according to our method of 13½ years, and from 1670 to 1690 according to Hofmayr. 51) A migration led by a chief like Chakab does not require a century or 70 years to achieve its target, and unless we refute Westerman's date of the coming of the White Nile Dinka, we are obliged to state that the Shilluk are more recent in history than the Fung. Such a migration took place during the time of the ninth Shilluk king, and completed its objective during the nineteenth Fung king's rule, and allowing only a generation (33 years) for the whole process, from the beginning of the migration to its end, we may see that, at most, the twelfth Shilluk king was contemporaneous with the nineteenth Fung king, i.e. the Fung preceded the Shilluk by 40 years at least.

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49) Westermann, p. LV.

50) Hofmayr, pp. 72-73.

51) Ibid, p. 72.

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8) The Space Problem:

It has been stated above in the Fung Chronicles that Amara Dunkas rallied his forces at Jebel Maya, west of Sennar, before launching his final attack against the Alwa kingdom. And henceforth, until the fall of the Fung kingdom in 1820, this area in central Gezira remained the capital, and accordingly the center of power in the Fung history.

To the south and on the Blue Nile, there was another center of power: Fasugli, with a list of kings from 1618 52) onwards until 1820. These kings were vassals of the Sennar kings, and apparently their power extended over the whole Berta-speaking tribes, now mostly in Ethiopia. To the west of Fasugli there was another vassal chieftainship on Jebel Gule, and its power extended to the northwestern group of mountains that form the Dar Fung area. The real date of erecting this chieftainship is much disputed.

The whole of Beni Shangul tribe, and the Fadasi area, now within the borders of modern Ethiopia, were provinces incorporated in the Fung state. On the sheet North, No C 36, Sobat, of the 1 : 1,000,000 of African Maps, Fadasi lies about 9°45' Northern latitude, and 34°45' Eastern longitude. The Beni Shangul tribes are found to the north and northeast of Fadasi.

Arkell says: "After consolidating the kingdom from Sennar, with a relative established at Laich (El-Ais = Kawa) as a governor of their Shilluk relatives on the lower White Nile, the Fung kings seem gradually to have extended their dominion south up the Blue Nile as far as the Abyssinian highlands beyond Beni Shangul and Fadasi, and later east, to include the Beni Amer, and west as far as the Nuba Mountains and the frontiers of Darfur". 53)

Also Mr. Chataway recognizes this state of affairs in the south, stating that the Mekship of Keili was first governed from Diss, a town on the Blue Nile north of Roseires, to be moved later on southwards to Hegrieg, and finally to Keili. This Keili lies at 10°50' northern latitude, and 34°20' eastern longitude, and must have exercised power on the whole of the northeastern Dar Fung.

These two evidences show that the Fung were expanding consistently southwards, and this expansion, as Arkell's statement implies, was before the Fung expansion across the White Nile to the Nuba mountains and Kordofan. Moreover, this continuous expansion to the south continued through all the Fung history in spite of other expansions to west or east, and in spite of internal conflicts in Sennar. This is proved by Mr. Chataway's

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52) Jackson, p. 104

53) Arkell, (A) p. 247.

174 statement "that the people of these hills (the Burun) were only conquered by the Fung after the viziers had seized power, i.e. just over a hundred years ago". 84)

We can conclude from the foregoing statements that expansion to the south was a constant feature of the Fung policy, be it an intended policy, or just the sequence of events, and the economic and geopolitical reasons which led to it.

Now if we turn to the White Nile Area, the district in which any possible contact between the Shilluk and the Fung may occur, we find only vague material in the Fung traditions about its political status. We know that later on, the White Nile was a crossroad to the Fung governed areas to the west. And from this time also we know that a garrison was stationed at El-Ais, the governor of which was not suffered to leave it. This is quite a logical assumption, because we know that the shortest way across the Gezira is from El-Ais to Sennar, and due to the power of the Darfur kingdom, which was felt strongly on the plains of Kordofan, no better defence line for Sennar could be found than the broad White Nile. So, a military station had to be erected here, and no wonder if the commander of this post was not allowed to leave his duties. This may be the most logical explanation of the state of affairs during the middle to the last parts of the Fung kingdom. But what was the situation in the early phase of the Fung?

It is quite clear that all the Arab tribes on the western bank of the White Nile to at least 13 degrees Northern Latitude were incorporated into the Fung kingdom from the start, or at least loyal to the Abdul-Laab Sheikhs, the viceroys of Sennar in the North. On the eastern banks, the Sennar authority must have dominated till at least 12 degrees Northern Latitude, which is facing the Mekship of Qulo, and separated from the White Nile by a stretch of 80 Kilometers of flat land.

If we remember that the Dinka occupied the eastern White Nile banks comparatively late, 85) and that at this time in the early Fung period, until the middle of the 19th century, slavery constituted an important part of economy, and adding that the eastern as well as the western banks of the White Nile are characterised by their flatness, we get a picture illustrating the situation in the area in at least the first half of the 18th century; numerous slave and ivory expeditions on the part of the Fung up the White Nile basin, with -maybe- a kind of military garrison to secure the safety of these expeditions. What better situation for such a garrison than either Jebel Ahmed Agha on the eastern White Nile bank on the 11th degree Nerther Latitude, or the area of the present Malakal, where the various Nile tributaries unitein one main artery?

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84) Seligman, p. 448.

85) See above p.

I have proposed Jebel Ahmed Agha as a site of the Fung garrison, because it is well protected by the mountain, and its older name was mentioned by Werne as Defafenj in 1840, by Pothrick in 1862 as Jebel Tefan, by the Omda (mayor) of Abu Geili, as Jebel Tiafam, and by Malder as Jebels Teifa and Fam. 56) Of interest to us is that Defafenj means in Arabic The Bank of the Fung. It could imply the borders of the Fung.

The other choice, the present Malakal area as a site for a Fung garrison, is supported by the Shilluk tradition. Here, we come to solid proof that the Fung and the Shilluk did contact each other. At the very beginning of the Shilluk history as told by their tradition, Nyikang, while consolidating his power in the Shillukland by subduing the various segments of the original inhabitants, met with a force called Cai or Ja puny 57), which are both identical with the people of Sennar, or the Fung. The Shilluk tradition tells of a battle at Wah -a locality a little north of Malakal- between the Fung and the Shilluk under Nyikang's leadership. Though the Shilluk were not victorious in this battle, the Fung seem to have retired to the north, perhaps to Jebel Ahmed Agha.

This was the first Shilluk-Fung encounter; a hostile relationship! Afterwards, we hear of more relations, of wars and slave hunting, and even of a kind of alliance in warfare. The end result of such changing relationships was the existence of many Shilluk slaves and warriors among the inhabitants of the Sennar area, in addition to other slaves from the Nuba Mountains, and other parts of the Negroid and Negro Sudan.

Thus, we may see that the Fung were expanding to the south always, and if they expanded in the Dar Fung area -which is a mountainous area- it would be easier for them to extend their rule up the White Nile basin, which afforded no such geographical hindrances, and simultaneously afforded a bigger and wider influx of resources such as slaves, ivory, and other articles of trade, which were not only consumed in Sennar, but found other markets in Western Asia and Europe through Cairo. But as the upper White Nile basin is more or less an area infested with swamps and other ecological conditions alien to the Arabs and to the Fung settlers, there were no well defined borders. It was merely a highway, and in a political sense a no-man's land.

3) The Cultural Aspects of Kingship

a) The meaning of kingship:

Among the Shilluk, all writers agree that the notion of kingship is an undivided part of the Shilluk religion. Nyikang, though a national hero and possibly a real historical personality, is considered by the Shilluk to be still living to protect the land

56) Arkell, (A), p. 216.

57) Lienhardt, p. 144, see footnote No 1.

643 776 of his followers. The Shilluk do not say that Nyikang died or passed away, but say -as my informants told me- he was angry with his people, and, in a stormy night, was gone. This assumption is necessary for the conception of Shilluk kingship. The idea may be summarized thus:

1. Every king who rules the Shilluk is an incarnation of Nyikang,
2. as the soul of Nyikang is thus incarnated in the body of the king, it would suffer every kind of weakness the body suffers;
3. as this would mean the loss of the protective and guiding spirit of the whole nation, it was necessary that the kings should not be left to die of old age;
4. and thus came what we term the ritual killing of the king.

171 Among the Fung, we have no such idea about kings, and the post of kingship itself. This is due to the fact that the Fung were Moslems, and as it is implied in Islam, there is only One God, and there is no possibility of incarnation, or such would be a return to paganistic practices. No one who wrote about the Fung kings ever hinted at the existance of such an idea. Thus, one of the conditions of divine kingship, indeed the core of this kind of kingship, is lacking among the Fung.

b) The Mode of Accession to the Throne:

643 It is easy to understand the Shilluk notion of incarnation from the way they apply it. The important feature which dominates the installation ceremonies of Shilluk kings is the seating of the king-elect on a special stool brought for the occasion from the Shrine of Nyikang at Akurwa. At first, the wooden effigy of Nyikang is placed on the stool by a priest, symbolising that Nyikang himself is sitting on the stool; then the effigy is removed and the king is seated. In this way, the [775] soul of Nyikang takes possession of the body of the new king. And after this ceremony, the king is considered a king.

Another important rite in a king's installation is that a king must pass a month in complete seclusion before going to Fashoda for the seating ceremony, and another ten days in a special place called Aturwic in Fashoda after the seating ceremony. In this time, the king is considered to be in a solemn mood of contemplation, and in communication with his great grandfather, Nyikang, and other ancestors. During this time of seclusion, the king is provided with a girl, who is given to him by a special clan. It was the custom that the king would marry this girl afterwards, but now it is according to his wish. Human sacrifices at the installation ceremony are said to be given up now, but they were practiced in the past. 58)

58) In former times, it was usual that the king would pass over a bounded old man as he marches towards Fashoda, and the multitude of the Shilluk followers of the king would also tread on this man, and naturally he dies. Now a sheep and bull are used instead of the man. See Seligmann, p. 94, and Howell, p. 196.

Of the Fung, we have no record about the way their kings were crowned in Sennar. But ceremonies of installing the chief of Jebel Gule were recorded recently, and it is alleged that it is an imitation of what was once the case in Sennar. 59) No human sacrifices were recorded, but the seating of the chief on a stool, and his seclusion in a special hut with a girl for forty days after the seating are recorded, but he is allowed to meet friends after sunset every day. The stool in this recorded ceremony was brought from Jebel Keili, another principality of the Fung kingdom, because the stool of Gule was destroyed during the Mahdiya regime. The stool is guarded by "Nas el 'ada, whom one might apparently describe as the hereditary guardian of the mysteries", 60)

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If we accept the alleged similarities between what was the case in Sennar and the ceremony at Gule, it would be interesting to point out that there is no effigy, nor any special symbol seated before the new chief sits on the stool. The lack of such a rite undoubtedly indicates the failure of such comparison between the Shilluk and the Fung. The sitting on the stool would then mean the lawful inheritance of power in the country, just as it is and was practiced among civilized nations. What is really underlying the sitting on a throne, we cannot at the moment venture to say.

e) The Mode of Death of Kings:

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We have stated above that the ceremonial killing of a king would still be in practice, if the Shilluk were given free choice. Shilluk kings were either strangled, clubbed to death, or walled up in a hut until they died.

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Among the Fung, we have no information about king killing, except the inference Bruce gave about a special post in Sennar for a royal executioner. It may have been the case that brothers fought for power in Sennar, but this was a wide phenomenon all over the world. It can be a ceremonial killing, if the whole kingship institution was based upon the idea of incarnating the guiding spirit of the nation in the person of the king. But since this conception was missing in Sennar, as another point of comparison widens the gap between the Fung and the Shilluk.

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59) Chataway challenges the validity of comparing the traditions of Jebel Gule with what was the case in Sennar. He says "Gule ... is mentioned several times by Arkell. While information regarding Fung history and customs may be obtained at Gule, it is essential to recognise that it is a tainted and unreliable source, a point which other observers have failed to recognise". Charaway, p. 114.

60) Arkell, (A), p. 232.

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174 4) Evidences of the Theory of a Shilluk origin of the Fung:

James Bruce was the first to declare that the Fung were originally a Shilluk northern offshoot, who descended upon the Arabs, defeated them, and erected Sennar as a seat of their new Kingdom.

First of all, it is quite clear from the Journal of Bruce that he was very much interested in the Shangally, and probably confused Shangalla, Shankala, and Shilluk. Once, while in Tcawa near Godaref, he said that "The Fung were originally Shankala or Hamidge", 61) and on arriving at Sennar, he added, "and are, as they are called, Funge, that is Shangalla converted to Islamism, of the country whence those Shangalla came to drive out the Arabs under Wad Agib. Of these, the government is composed. The common Shilook, or troops of the king, are mostly pagans even yet." 62)

Further quotations from Bruce give an idea about the mess into which he had fallen. He says that the king of Sennar pretends to be of noble Arab element, "but his wooly hair, and black flat features, shew him to be a Shangalla; the particular name Shilook. These inhabit the large islands in the river El-Aice (the White Nile) ... The name of Shankala, given to the true blacks in Abyssinia, is not known in the kingdom of Sennar, though in features and complexion they are the same people. The rivel El-Aice is twice as broad as the Nile and very deep in all the course of it. Before it joins the Nile are many islands, in these dwell the Shilook, who reb in barks up the whole of it. The other blacks come from Guba, Noba, and Fazuelo, three southern provinces which depend on Sennar". 63)

The Shangalla or the Beni Shangul are Negros of negroid tribes, living in the river valleys in the mountainous western Abyssinian escarpment. They were included within the Fung kingdom throughout its history.

It would seem that the description of the White Nile, which Bruce names El-Aice, and the description of the people who inhabit the islands of this river, is quite a separate sentense, which has nothing to do with the preceding sentence, in which he returns the Fung to a Shangalla origin. This assumption is validated by the above quotation, in which he says that the Fung are the Shangalla converted to Islam, and defines the Shilluk as the troops of the king. But this again contradicts the famous quotation, in which Bruce asserts that in 1504 a Shilluk migration founded Sennar.

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174 It is interesting to know that Bruce's statement about the Nile was not correct. He imagined that the Blue Nile was the

133 61) Arkell, (A), p. 220

62) Ibid, p. 220

63) Ibid, p. 220

real Nile, and though he had explored the area of Lake Tana, he did not follow the river's course down the Sudan, but made a short-cut from Abyssinia to the Butana plains and to Sennar. All his knowledge about the course of the Blue Nile out of Sennar is hearsay only, as well as his knowledge about the White Nile. Thus, Bruce perceived that the mountains of Fazugli extend uninterrupted to the Nuba mountains. On this assumption he considered that the White Nile was a little tributary to the Main Nile, and had its source in the Fazugli-Nuba chain of mountains. If he erred in geographical points, could it not be possible that he would accordingly err in the relative positions of the various tribes? 114 174 133

Arkell dwelt on the statement of Bruce that the Sennar kings were lawfully killed by a special officer called Sid el Qom, and after the sanction of a special committee formed by the great officials of the kingdom. He tried to link this habit with the Shilluk divine kings, supporting ultimately the theory of the Shilluk origin of the Fung. Moreover, he depended much upon verbal similarities as proofs to his theory, such as Kwom, the Shilluk word for their sacred steel, to be transformed to Qom, in Sid el Qom etc. We have shown clearly that any comparison between the Shilluk king-killing and the alledged Fung killing is false, due to the lack of the essential notion of kings as incarnations of the first Shilluk king. 114 173 174

Crawford, though he does not suggest a Shilluk origin of the Fung, says that there were certain Shilluk associations. He further states: "I suggest that the Shilluk association was not derived directly from the Shilluk region on the White Nile, but indirectly from the Fazughli region and the gebels to the west whose inhabitants were partly at any rate of Shilluk origin. When Amara Dunkas marched down the Blue Nile and founded his kingdom he may have carried with him some of these Shilluk associations ..."84) Crawford then suggests that the Shilluk migrated to this area from the White Nile region starting from Melut, or Jebel Ahmed Agha, or Renk. He is compelled to such an explanation because 114 174

1) he finds that the inhabitants of the Fazugli region are "Negroid, and can hardly therefore have come from the north or east, and in the southeast is the land of the Hamitic Gallas". 85)
2) that "evidence of place names (in both this area and the White Nile area) is here quite conclusive". 86)

It is quite clear that Crawford does not take into consideration that the whole of the Fazugli area as well as other areas to the north were, in the distant past, a Negro home, which shrank to the present picture of pockets in the river valleys which cut deep in the western escarpment of the Abyssinian plateau,

84) Crawford, p. 158

85) ibid, p. 157

86) ibid, p. 157.

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114 and in the hilly offshoots of the Abyssinian highlands represented
174 by the Dar Fung mountains. This shrinkage was due to the everlasting extension of the Hamitic and other Caucasic racial elements towards the south. Secondly, the evidences of similar place names do not mean a Shilluk migration alone, because though the Nilotic percentage in these tribes' languages did reach about 65%, "further analysis directed to determine which Nilotic language had exerted the greatest pressure indicated no real distinction ... the percentages being Nuer 47%, Shilluk 46%, and Dinka 45%". 67

If the Burun -a tribal group in the Dar Fung area- are included within the Nilotic language group, 68) and if there is a probability that the Dar Fung tribes are similar in their physical attributes to the substratum of the northern Shilluk province, then there is no wonder to see strong resemblances between both areas, and no wonder that many authorities erred in trying to clarify this resemblance by a one-sided Shilluk influence extended to Dar Fung.

On the same ground we can refute Westermann's assumption that "it is possible that this Shilluk population (the Berta and other Dar Fung tribes) in Sennar (probably he means the Fung kingdom) came to political influence and took part in the government of the state". 69) In reality there is need to assume a Shilluk migration, or invasion in this mountainous Dar Fung region, because the Shilluk are a riverain tribe, and on account of a common substratum, physical, cultural and linguistic in both areas.

6) Conclusion:

174 From the foregoing survey it is now clear that there
648 existed a relationship between the Fung and the Shilluk, but it is not a relationship of common origin.

The statement of Bruce about the invasion of the Gezira
114 by the Shilluk is not supported by dates nor by tradition of either
174 the Shilluk or the Fung. The only support comes from the Hamag elders of Jebel Gule, 70) but Mr. Chataway answers this question quite rightly. He states that "The Abu Likeilik family, when trying to oust the Fung, would be up against an obstacle of strong prejudice, seeing that they could not deny their descent from mere 'abid'. It was then too late to provide a satisfactory niche for the Hamag, and the alternative was to say that the Fung were no better. Why not say the Fung were Shilluk and tack the suggestion on the existing traditions of Shilluk raids? That the Fung were black was added evidence, evidence to which Bruce seems to have given undue weight". 71)

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67) Seligman, p. 422
68) Batt includes the Burun in the Nilotic language group, and treats them as such in his book.
69) Westermann, p. LVI.
70) See note No 59)
71) Chataway, p. 117.

In fact, the tradition of the Shilluk tells us of hostile relations between them and the Fung, and their first encounter, as was stated above, was on a battlefield. It is quite logical that, as the Fung extended their domains across the White Nile to the Nuba mountains and the Kordofan, the Shilluk were also -for a time- incorporated in the Fung domains. 72) We must not exempt the Shilluk from sharing the same fate with other Negro and Negroid neighbouring tribes. Many of the members of these tribes were transplanted to the Sennar area, forming the bulk of the Fung armies. It is recorded that these people gave their old village names to the new villages where they were living in service of the Fung Empire. Shilluk were among the Sennar armies, and Bruce rightly said that Shilluks are the troops of the king. And owing to the extreme aloofness and haughtiness of a Shilluk, it is not possible to explain the existence of Shilluk in the Fung army, or the transplantation of these Shilluk outside their country as an act of free will on the part of the Shilluk, or as free lancers serving the military ambitions of their deadly foe. The Shilluk must have been compelled to such acts under coercive conditions. We must always bear in mind that the Shilluk were facing a better organized enemy, with cavalry, which was totally unknown warfare equipment to the Shilluk. The Shilluk may have been excellent in using their tactics of surprise attacks, and on relatively isolated groups, but should this tactic succeed against organized armies with cavalry?

Recorded in the Shilluk songs are many pieces describing the frequent Arab slave raids, the havoc they played with the Shilluk, and prayers to the Shilluk former kings and ancestors to help them against the marauders. How could it be possible then to understand the situation arising from the assumption of a Shilluk origin of the Fung, or the statement of Arkell telling us that the governor of El-Ais was ruling the Shilluk relatives on the White Nile? How could it be possible that the Fung would forget their origin and loot their relatives, subduing them to slaves or mercenaries? And if the Fung did not themselves raid the Shilluk on account of alleged blood-relationship, why did they not afford them protection against Arab raids if we know that the Arab raiders are included in the Fung domain?

The other aspect upon which Arkell leaned was the killing of kings in Sennar, and the resemblance of this habit with that which prevails among the Shilluk. But we have invalidated this statement upon qualitative grounds.

If kings of Sennar were killed lawfully by a royal executioner, which in itself is not a fact agreed upon, they were killed on a totally different basis from that which was practiced among the Shilluk. Furthermore, we know that Shilluk kings were either suffocated, or clubbed to death, but with the Fung, a king

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72) Arkell, (B), p. 17. He states that "The Fung Kingdom at its prime included most of the present Sudan, from Hannek in the north to Beni Shangul and the Shilluk country in the south ..."

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174 was killed by cutting off his head with a SWORD, any other weapon
643 being a violation of custom. Tremeaux writes that " .., une épée,
seul instrument légal en pareil cas (tue un roi)". 73) This is
another qualitative difference between the Shilluk and the Fung,
411 because we know that the Shilluk never use or used swords as weapons.

Now the information Bruce was furnished with came mostly
114 from Ashmet Sid el Qom, the alledged regicide of Sennar. This man
643 is from Fazugli, and as we always have to be cautious with Bruce's
statements, we do not know exactly whether Ashmet Sid el Qom spoke
about the custom of king killing as it was in the past in his
country of birth. Professor Arad and Mr. Chataway are also of this
opinion. What supports such an idea is what Frazer says about the
ceremonial killing of the Fazugli kings. Frazer writes: "In some
tribes of Fazoql the king had to administer justice daily under
a certain tree. If because of sickness or any other cause he was
unable to discharge this duty for three whole days, he was hanged
on the tree in a noose, which contained two razors so arranged
that when the noose was drawn tight by the weight of the king's
body, they cut his throat". 74) Seligman also quotes three instances
from Frazer about the killing of the king at Fazugli. 75)

171 King killing is a widely spread custom in Africa, and to
643 try to cope with it is outside the scope of this paper. But in the
Nile Valley, we have instances of the existence of the custom in
Meroe, when king Ergamones cut the throats of the priests instead
of letting them kill him. We also have a story collected by
Frobenius in Kordofan about the custom of king killing, and how
one king was able to avoid his fate; and henceforth, the custom
was abandoned. 76 This custom is in practice, or now in dormant
form, among the Shilluk, the Burun and many other tribes of Dar Fung.
It was alleged to be in existence among the Sennar kings, and was
also alledged to have been the custom of the Abdullah Arabs, who
were the viceroys of the Fung kings in the North. 77) If thus the
114 custom was widely spread in the Nile Valley, there is no point in
171 alleging that the custom in Sennar was brought by the Shilluk,
174 because it is now clear that the origin of such a custom is to be
643 sought after in the deep past of the cultures and civilisations
that were planted, or originated in the Nile Valley.

There is no doubt that the Dar Fung tribes, as well as
174 the Nuba of southern Kordofan, represent the older substratum of
the whole of the central and southern Sudan. This is judged by
their isolation, the poverty of their present lands -which are
merely rocky hills- the different languages and cultures etc.

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73) Tremeaux, p. 199
74) Frazer, p. 266
75) Seligman, p. 425
76) Frobenius, L., Chapter I.
77) H.A. MacMichael, in his "History of the Arabs in the Sudan",
Cambridge 1922, quoted by Seligman, p. 426.

174

Strong new invasions from the north always swept the plains, and compelled the older cultures with their practitioners to seek refuge areas. But it is not expected that the whole of the older population will seek new homes; many will stay and, after a time, when the new-comers have forgotten their former superiority and pride, both componants will mingle, to a certain extent, freely with each other. After that it is expected that there will be a free reciprocal exchange of cultural elements, modified to the new conditions.

On the basis of such theory, can we explain the fact that it was only in the reign of King Dakin, number 5 in the list of Sennar, and in the reign of King Tugo, number 10 in the Shilluk list, that coronation ceremonies were introduced in each kingdom separately? It would be highly probable to justify such an assumption if we remember that the Fung were incorporating part of the older population, namely the Hamej, into their kingdom, and that the northern part of the Shillukland at least belongs to this old stratum of peoples.

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Abbreviations

JRAI: Journal of the Historical Society, Cairo.
SNR: Sudan Notes and Records, Khartoum.
WVk: Wiener Völkerkundliche Mitteilungen, Wien.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG:

1768 vertrat Bruce die Ansicht, dass die Shilluk von den Fung herzuleiten wären. Dieser Standpunkt löste eine heftige Diskussion pro und kontra aus. Vorwiegend waren es Historiker, die an Hand mündlicher Traditionen sich um die Herkunftsfrage der Shilluk bemühten.

Unser Mitarbeiter, Mr. M. Riad, der heuer eine Studienreise zu den Shilluk unternommen hatte (siehe: Some Observations among the Shilluk, Wiener Völkerkundliche Mitteilungen III/1, pgs. 70 ff.), versucht das Thema von der ethnologischen und geographischen Seite her zu beleuchten. Er kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass die Fung zeitlich tiefer belegbar sind, während die Shilluk als eine von ihren Urkönig gegründete Nation verhältnismässig jung anzusetzen sind. Aus der Geschichte der Shilluk scheint hervorzugehen, dass sie zeitweilig von den Fung unterworfen waren.